

WE HAVE AN AMAZING UNITY IN CHRIST

Ephesians 4:4-6

Why are there so many different church denominations? Is there any way to have unity? Illustration of Harry Ironside – Psalm 119:63. In Ephesians 4:4-6 the Apostle Paul lists seven “ones” that unite us as believers in Jesus Christ.

1.THERE IS ONE BODY BECAUSE THERE IS ONLY ONE SPIRIT – Ephesians 4:4

- The Holy Spirit creates the Body of Christ. As our Life-giver He breathes life into our deadness and leads us to Christ as our Savior. The Holy Spirit is also the One who enables us to live for Christ and live in unity. He produces the love, patience, gentleness, and humility to have unity.

2.THERE IS ONE HOPE, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM BECAUSE THERE IS ONLY ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST– Ephesians 4:5

- We have one Hope because of being called to Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord – 1 Corinthians 8:6; 12:3. Hope is assured confidence for the future. This is because Jesus Christ is the Victor now and forever. All true believers have a sure future and shared eternal destiny.
- We have one faith which is focused on Jesus Christ – Galatians 2:16. Faith here probably refers to our shared beliefs, not just personal faith in the Lord Jesus – 1 Timothy 4:1; 6:20, 21. There is a body of truth which is essential to believe, including the Deity of Christ, His Virgin Birth, His sinless life, Christ’s death in our place for our sins on the cross, His bodily resurrection, and His Coming Again. We also must believe the Bible as Truth and in the Trinity. These are essentials and non-negotiables which form the basis of real unity. Illus. – CCEFC.
- Longing to be deeply nourished in the Scriptures promotes unity – Ephesians 4:14. Growing together in Bible study can help unify the church. We often argue other people’s opinions, but let us read the Word ourselves. *“The closer we get to the text, the more we’ll move toward agreement on the things that matter most – and the more we’ll deal charitably with one another on the matters of conviction and preference, too.” – Jen Wilkin, Contemporary Author.* Despite different denominations, there is a lot of unity around gospel essentials. We have an authoritative Interpreter. His name is the Holy Spirit – John 16:13,14.
- We have one baptism which links us to Christ and identifies us with Christ. The most important baptism is by the Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13. Physical baptism pictures our salvation and our union with Christ – Romans 6:3-5. It is an outward sign of an inward reality. Churches differ on baptism, but the main thing is our identification with Jesus Christ and His people. *“Paul is not concerned with modes of baptism, but with what baptism signifies, namely, identification with Christ. That is the unifying thing...I do not care whether it was in a baptistery or a stream, whether it was with a little bit of water or in a lot of water. Have you been publicly identified with Jesus Christ?” – James Boice.*

3. THERE IS ONE FAMILY OF BELIEVERS BECAUSE WE HAVE ONE FATHER – Ephesians 4:6

- The Father unites us into One Family – Ephesians 3:14,15. In Christ we are God’s children. He is sovereign over all, even through all the ups and downs of life, yet lives in us, and is glorified in our lives – Ephesians 2:22.

4.UNITY IS ROOTED IN THE TRINITY – ONE SPIRIT, ONE LORD, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL

- The order of the Trinity in this passage may reflect the order in which we experience the Trinity. The Spirit first works in us bringing new life. He points us to Jesus Christ our Lord. He places us into the Body of Christ. Jesus Christ is received as Savior and Lord, the only One who can rescue us from sin, death, and hell because of His sacrifice for us. Jesus brings us to God as our Father – 1 Peter 3:18a.
- The Trinity is the basis of true unity and displays ultimate unity – John 17:1,2; 21. There is also diversity in the union of the Trinity. All three Persons of the Trinity are One in Essence or Nature, but have their own function or roles. So unity does not mean uniformity. But it means a shared purpose, goals, and worldview.
- Because there is only One Triune God, there is only One True Church, of all true believers in Jesus – 1 Corinthians 1:2. *“We must assert that there can be only Christian family, only one Christian faith, hope, and baptism, and only one Christian body, because there is only one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You can no more multiply churches than you multiply Gods. Is there one God? Then He has only one church...It is no more possible to split the church than it is possible to split the Godhead.” – John Stott, Ephesians.*

Concluding Applications:

- Are you identified with Jesus and His church?
- How are you eagerly maintaining unity?
- Are you growing in your grasp of the Bible and essential truths?